

MYP...Areas of Interaction

The ***areas of interaction*** are a distinctive feature of the Middle Years Programme. They are a ‘thinking tool’ giving depth and meaning to what students learn in the classroom and providing exciting opportunities for making it relevant and personal to them. There are five areas of interaction:

Approaches to Learning

...is central to all subjects and is concerned with developing effective study skills, critical thinking and reflection, students’ responsibility for learning and development and the attitude of lifelong learners and informed citizens.

Community and Service

... encourages awareness of the different communities we belong to, as well as willingness to become involved and respond to the needs of others.

Human Ingenuity

...celebrates human creativity, genius and inventiveness, at the same time examining the consequences of human inventions on our world and how these inventions affect our quality of life.

Environments

... considers a variety of environments, natural and human-made, their qualities and our responsibilities in creating and conserving them.

Health and Social Education

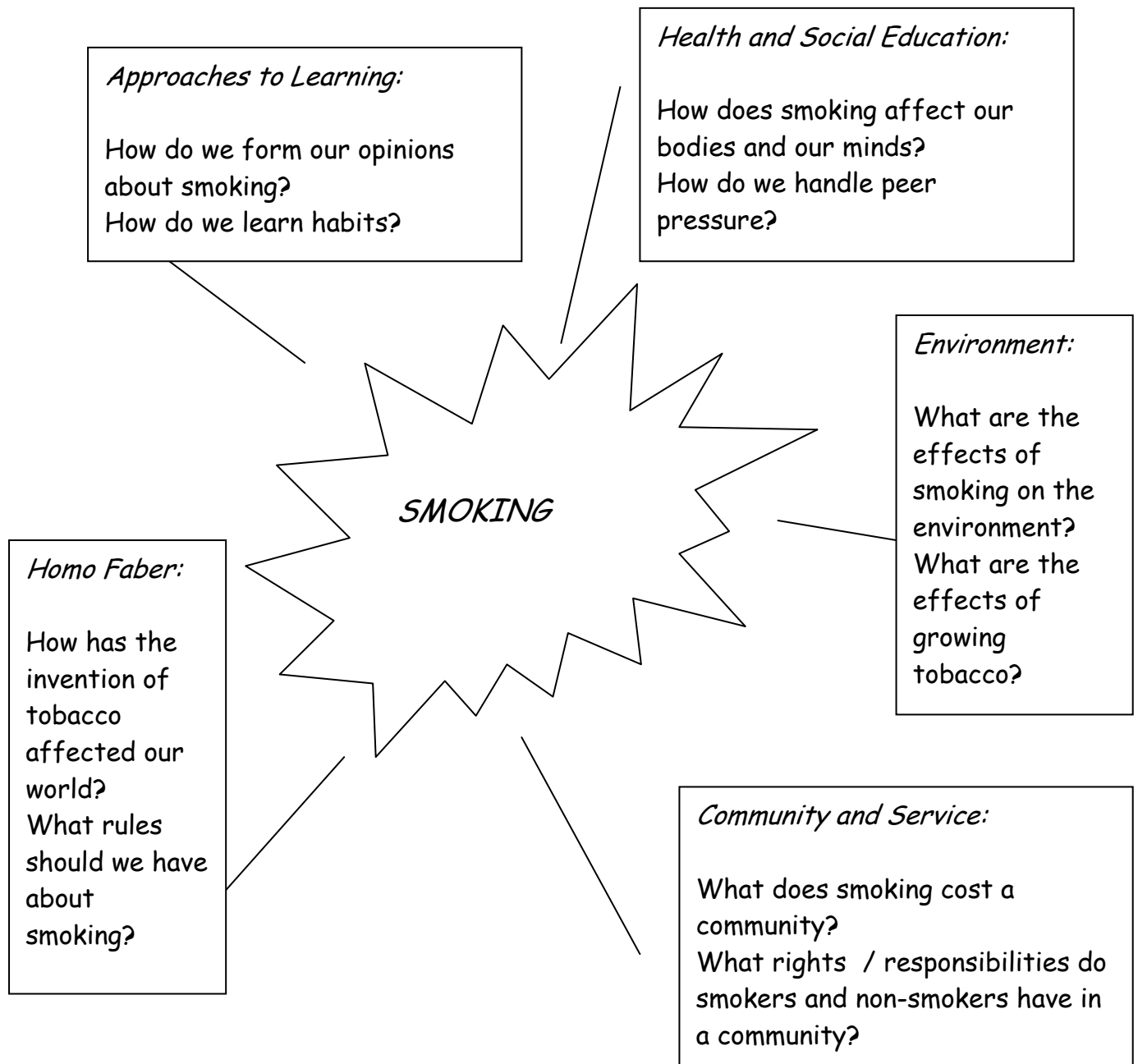
... teaches us to understand and care for our physical, social and emotional health and intelligence as well as form positive, caring and respectful relationships with others.

The areas of interaction can be thought of as themes or ‘lenses’ through which any topic in any subject can be examined, organized and explored. Their purpose is to:

- ✓ enable students to view a topic from various perspectives
- ✓ provide a structure for discussing and reflecting on issues and ask questions about it
- ✓ help students to appreciate that issues are often complex and interrelated, and that most real world problems require skills and experience from a variety of disciplines
- ✓ give teachers an approach for interdisciplinary teaching (i.e. projects or topics that involve more than one subject and / or teacher)
- ✓ help students to create links between what they learn in the classroom and how it applies in the outside world

In the last year of the MYP students are given the opportunity to apply their understanding of the areas of interaction by structuring a Personal Project around one or more areas of their choice.

The MYP requires teachers to make the areas of interaction central to teaching their subject. At IST we do this by structuring teaching plans on all our topics around a central question, in the context of one area of interaction. Here is an example:



There is some overlap between the areas of interaction, so for example in asking the question “*What does smoking cost the community?*” students might consider costs of health care (HSE), or the cost to a farming community of a drop in tobacco production because of a decrease in demand (HF) or the cost to the environment of tobacco monoculture (Env).

Nevertheless, the chosen area (and related question) structures the topic and leads to us looking at it from a particular angle, through a particular 'lens' or in a particular context. It also creates links between subjects and links to wider issues.

Here are more examples of essential questions from different subjects:

- How can humour heal the spirit?
- What are the rights and responsibilities of people in a community?
- How can we make accurate decisions based on statistics?
- What is a 'hostile' environment?
- What do artists do once everything has been tried?

Further information about the MYP can be found on the IBO website, www.ibo.org

Please also feel free to contact the MYP co-ordinator or any of the teachers if you have specific questions.